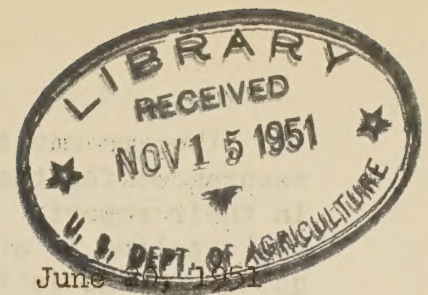


DISPLACED PERSONS COMMISSION  
Washington 25, D. C.



A REPORT ON FARM LABOR SUPPLY AMONG GERMAN EXPELLEES

Many American farmers can solve their labor problems and increase production for the Nation's long-pull mobilization and civilian demands by sponsoring "unusually competent" Volksdeutsche farm workers, according to United States agricultural specialists.

Among more than 1,000 farm families interviewed in Germany and Austria who want to immigrate to the United States, are dairymen, poultrymen, cattlemen, wheat and corn farmers, truck farmers, hog raisers, and vineyardists. They were described by the specialists as "industrious and with a definite desire to continue as farmers."

The Displaced Persons Commission, taking cognizance of the shortage of skilled American farm labor to meet this country's economic demands, 4 months ago instituted its program of certifying experienced farmers among European refugees.

The necessity of tapping every available source for farm labor has been stressed by Secretary of Agriculture Brannan, who said:

"Farm operators and workers comprise a key agricultural resource in our defense effort. This year--when we are asking for record production --we must have sufficient workers to plant and harvest our crops. Since 1949, however, there has been a downward trend in the number of workers on farms in the United States. In May of this year, there were 500,000 fewer workers on farms than a year ago, and the figure is 1,500,000 under the postwar peak in 1946 and 1947. These developments point to the need for tapping all available sources of farm labor."

The Volksdeutsche farmers, descended from a stock that has tilled the soil since the fifth century, are among 54,000 eastern European refugees of German origin who will be permitted to come into the United States under the Displaced Persons Act. Descendants of Germans who settled several hundred years ago in countries now behind the Iron Curtain, they became substantial farmers, but lost the fruits of their lifetime labor when the Communists moved in.

Expellees interested in coming to the United States must meet rigid tests as to qualification and experience, according to the specialists who have been interviewing the applicants since last March. They are C. R. Zoerb, county agent, Medford, Wis.; A. W. Rudnick, dairyman, Iowa State College; E. C. Lenzmeier, county agent, St. Cloud, Minn.; A. J. Rehling, farm adviser, Illinois Agricultural Extension Service; Paul W. Kunkel, county agent, Sleepy Eye, Minn.; and L. E. Rust, Paxton, Ill., farmer.



"We are mindful of our responsibility to American farmers providing assurances for these German refugee farmers," the specialists declared in their report. "When we finish with our interviews and certify that the expellee is a farmer with certain kinds of experience, you can be quite sure he is the kind of farmer so classified."

Among those who look forward to "another chance in life," they said, are "fine single farm boys ranging in age from 21 to 35 years." Less than 5 percent of all Volksdeutsche applicants interviewed had more than three or more children. Their forefathers, they added, had been farmers for centuries, some settling in southeastern Europe more than 800 years ago.

Even though the expellees carry cards identifying their profession, the farm specialists through their interviews soon determine their knowledge of farming. By subtle questioning on crops, soil conservation, crop rotation, farm machinery, livestock, fruit, vegetables, and other subjects, the specialists are able to detect the genuine farmer from the expellee posing as a farmer in order to speed up his immigration to the United States.

Applicants were asked such questions as: "How far will a tractor run on a litre of gas?" "How old is a gilt before she can be bred?" "How deep does corn have to be planted?"

If he has been a real farmer, his farm experience and know-how are made part of his record--the size of his farming operation; the length of time he has done farm work; whether he was a farm owner-operator; and kind of farm (whether general, livestock, or vineyard). Then he is classified for general farm, dairy farm, fruit or truck farm, and graded as excellent, good, fair, or poor.

Some of the men interviewed have a dual background, being former owner-operators of sizable farms who became masons, carpenters, and craft workers in order to support themselves and their families when they were forced to flee and abandon all they possessed.

"These men are versatile and fit in with the jack-of-all-trades abilities of American farmers," the specialists noted.

Volksdeutsche from the Ukraine are experienced in the operation of American tractors, both wheel and caterpillar, as well as the more popular combines.

Applicants also included former prisoners of war who gained additional farm experience in France, England, and the United States, especially on large dairy farms where they milked cows by hand and machine and had the opportunity of using big farm equipment such as tractors, potato diggers, and hay-harvesting machines.

Among the qualified persons interviewed was a Volksdeutsche from Czechoslovakia, whose education was equivalent to one obtained at an agricultural college in the United States. He kept 80 cows, had his own



milking machine, produced an average of 300 hogs a year, and his poultry business consisted of 1,000 layers.

Another was a fourth-generation German of a family that were owner-operators of a 140-acre grain and vineyard farm in Rumania. They were expelled by the Communists, not because of any individual guilt, but because of their blood lines, language, and customs, and because their property was coveted by the Communists. A knock on the door during the night, a profane order to evacuate in an hour--time to grab a family keepsake and to get dressed--this was the climax of their 200-year effort in tilling the soil. Back home he had five men working for him; today he is employed as a laborer on a construction project. He is 44, ruddy, robust, strong.

He and his family of four are eager to return to the soil--this time to America.

When told he would have to start at the bottom as a farm worker, he told his interviewer:

"I recognize that, just as my ancestors did, but the soil of America will offer my children liberty and opportunity. Toward that goal we are willing to work."

There was also an owner-operator of a 2,000-acre estate whose entire life had been directed toward managing the farm enterprise of his estate. His possessions completely wiped out, he escaped into Germany and is now working on a farm and in the forest. He knows cost accounting because farming with him was a business.

Besides competent farm families and single farm workers, there are farm domestics, housekeepers, vegetable and fruit gardeners, orchardists, and landscape workers among the German expellees being selected by the farm specialists. The quality of the people in such skills, the specialists reported, is fully as high as among the farm workers in the United States.

"America's displaced persons program stemmed from the bigness of our hearts, but in the present mobilization effort it has become a program of mutual aid," said Harry N. Rosenfield, of Washington, Acting Chairman of the Displaced Persons Commission.

"This new plan of sending farm specialists to Germany and Austria to interview German expellee farmers is designed so that our humanitarian program will fit into our national economic needs."

Rosenfield pointed out that an American sponsor for one of these farm families or for any displaced person or expellee must (1) assure a job at wages prevailing in the community without displacing another; (2) assure adequate housing without displacing another; (3) assure that the refugee will not become a public charge; and (4) provide transportation from United States port of entry to place of resettlement.

He further pointed out that persons interested in sponsoring a Volks-deutsche farmer or farm family are urged to write to the Displaced Persons Commission, Washington 25, D. C., or to their State Displaced Persons Commission or Committee, or to their church leaders.



with the machine, produced an average of 100 bags a year, and his family business consisted of 1,000 bags.

Another was a fourth-generation German of a family that were owners of a 100-acre estate and vineyard in Germany. They were educated by the Jesuits and members of the Jesuit Order, but because of their sickly, languid, and nervous, and because their estate was covered by the Jesuits. A family in the near future the night a package order to Germany in an hour - to give a family package and to get dressed - told me the cause of their 10-year estate in stilling the soil. Back home he had five sons working for him, today he is employed as a laborer on a construction project. He is 44, married, robust, strong.

He and his family of four are eager to return to the soil - this time to America.

When told he would have to stand at the bottom as a farm worker, he told his laborer:

"I recognize that, but as my ancestors did, but the soil is fertile will offer my children liberty and opportunity. I want that and will be willing to work."

There was also an owner-operator of a 2,000-acre estate whose estate life had been divided among the five children of the estate. His possessions completely wiped out, he started with nothing and is now working on a farm and in the forest. He knows more concerning Germany than most who was a laborer.

Another reported that families and estates who worked, those who were educated, housewives, vegetarians and with a pleasant, comfortable, and foreigner who among the German, reported being selected by the farm specialists. The quality of the people in each village, the specialists reported, is fully as high as among the farm workers in the United States.

"America's highest farm program started from the farmers of our country, and in the overseas market effort is to become a program of mutual aid," said Mr. H. Roosevelt, of Washington, noting that the United States is a free country.

"This new plan of sending farm specialists to Germany and Austria to instruct German and Austrian farmers is designed so that our immigration program will be into our national economic needs."

Roosevelt pointed out that an American farmer for one of these farm families or for any displaced person or refugee (1) would a job of wages, traveling in the country with a displaced person; (2) and who would be helping without displacing another; (3) would that the refugees will not become a public charge; and (4) provide transportation from United States port of entry to place of resettlement.

He further pointed out that persons interested in sponsoring a Voluntary farmer or farm family are urged to write to the United States Commission, Washington 25, D. C., or to their State Highway Bureau for relation or assistance, or to their church leaders.